

JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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KEN WEBER, CHAIR

CHUCK NOTBOHM

TOM LYTHGOE

**PROCEEDING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF JEFFERSON, STATE OF MONTANA
December 9, 2008**

Present: Commissioners Lythgoe and Weber; Dave Kirsch

Absent: Commissioner Notbohm

MINUTES

Commissioner Weber moved to approve the minutes of December 2. Commissioner Lythgoe seconded. The motion carried.

CALENDAR REVIEW

12/11 CTAC - 8:00
Tri-County Fire Safe - Helena - 9:00
Headwaters - Butte - noon
Library Board - 6:30
Weed Board - 6:30

COMMISSION REPORTS

BIOMASS CONFERENCE

Commissioner Lythgoe reported that he attended a biomass conference the previous day. The meeting was fairly well attended and was well covered in the *Independent Record*. He said that biomass deals with what is left over after the marketable materials have been obtained, such as tree tops and the slash. With the amount of beetle kill, no one really knows how to handle all of the dead trees. He found in talking to Terry Sexton that beetle kill trees have a useable life of two to three years.

Most think that this is not feasible in Montana at this time. You pretty much have to drive to where the materials are, and the equipment used is not very maneuverable on the roads, and you have to haul in a large chipper. It isn't economically feasible to do that. There is a lot of interest

and a lot of questions, but not a lot of solutions offered. The experts in the business – state lands, forest products industry – don't feel that it can work in Montana. As far as grants available to put boilers in, all money is gone. Commissioner Lythgoe stated that he was hoping that something like this would work in the courthouse, but it just isn't feasible at this time.

MEETING WITH MIKE WAITE

Commissioner Lythgoe reported that he met with Mike Waite this morning. The Commission asked him to work to try to resurrect the Elkhorn Cemetery issue. They also talked about Montana Tunnels and the Elkhorn Mine not being able to get operating funds with the current economic downturn. He asked if any of the economic stimulus package funds would be available for the mines. Mike will be checking into this as well.

WHITEHALL SCHOOL BOARD

Commissioner Weber reported that he met with the Whitehall School Board on Tuesday night and discussed PILT and SRS funds, and how they impact schools in the county. They appreciated the information and were glad that the Commission is sharing information with them.

OPEN HOUSE

Commissioner Weber reported that he attended the Great West Engineering open house of Friday night. They had a good turnout.

ENGINEERING

Commissioner Weber reported that he met with Mike Reis, an engineer with Kadrmas, Jackson and Lee. The firm wants to be able to bid for engineering and surveying services. They are aware that the County is not seeking bids at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Commission received a letter from Lee Alt with MDT regarding a speed zone study on the Jefferson City south frontage road. Commissioner Lythgoe said that he has reviewed this and would concur with their findings. A letter will be sent to MDT.

Commissioner Weber read a copy of Saddle Mountain Services fire suppression resolution (on file in the Clerk and Recorder's office). Commissioner Weber stated that he has talked about this with Matt, and apparently there is nothing that we can do about this.

ITEMS FOR COMMISSIONERS ACTION OR REVIEW

DISCUSS REVISING THE COUNTY LOGO

Commissioners Lythgoe and Weber discussed changing the County logo to one that features a

picture of the courthouse. Suggestions for words to add to the picture are: Jefferson County, Montana – Looking to the Future or Moving Forward.

This will be up for final discussion at the following meeting.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Kirsch asked about the L&P grocery store. They are building a new store, and asked if there are any tax incentives available for new businesses. Commissioner Lythgoe stated that he has talked to MACo about this in the past. There is something that we can do. Commissioner Weber stated that we will have to do some research. Commissioner Lythgoe noted that they are in the city limits, so it may be different, but we will find out.

Dave mentioned the dead trees from beetle kill and what a fire hazard they are, and asked if the Forest Service might consider putting in fire breaks. Commissioner Lythgoe stated that he isn't sure that you can even build a large enough fire break. During the North Hills fire, the fire jumped the Missouri River. At the meeting he attended the previous day, the position is that a direction other than biomass is the way to go. Commissioner Lythgoe stated that he would hope that those with private land will do what they need to do to take care of the trees on their own property. The Forest Service is going to focus on protecting structures as well as lives by clearing a certain distance back from roadways.

Commissioner Lythgoe moved to adjourn. Commissioner Weber seconded. The motion carried.

MEETING ADJOURNED

ATTEST:

BONNIE RAMEY
CLERK AND RECORDER

KEN WEBER, CHAIR

TOMAS E. LYTHGOE, COMMISSIONER

CHUCK NOTBOHM, COMMISSIONER

